

Without Pretense by AmeliaDarkholme

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Summary:

Eddie Kaspbrak likes to think he's a normal man, who works a normal job, and lives a normal life. He likes it though, despite how boring it sometimes feels - not that he'd ever admit it. Boring is good. Boring is safe.

But then it all changes when a young woman named Sabina Wilson literally drags him out of a gunfight, only to run face first into another gun, which is held in the hand of one Richie Tozier.

1. PROLOGUE

Author's Note:

This story is a crossover between the latest Charlie's Angels movie (which is surprisingly good btw) and Andy Muschietti's IT. I fell hard and fast for Kristen Stewart's Sabina Wilson, and if you guys have seen the movie, you'll understand why. Then, my lovely sister pointed out that Sabina's basically a female Richie Tozier, minus all the 'your mum' jokes, and if Richie had Barry Berkman's job. And that's really how I came up with this story. I'll admit, this is basically a self-indulgence story that I write for my own pleasure teehee :P

Feel free and tell me what do you think about the story so far :)

There was a reason why Bosley, also known to her closest as Rebekah Montgomery, had such a soft spot for a certain wayward Angel. No matter how infuriating she was with her stupid and ill-timed jokes, Sabina Wilson always got away with it. Every time Rebekah looked at the young lady with the smart-mouth, the former Angel would have a fond smile tugging her lips as her mind flew back to her past, to a man who was arguably *the* best friend she ever had. A man who had a troublesome childhood, despite being born into a well-off family. A man who was so famous for running his mouth that he got the nickname Trashmouth.

Once upon a time, long before she became an Angel, Rebekah was a CIA agent. And she was a good one. A great one, even. She could have been the best in her circle, if it weren't for her best friend. Her competitive nature would usually find it upsetting that she didn't become the number one agent in CIA. But Richie Tozier was just *so* difficult to hate, and she simply had no choice but to befriend the idiot instead. They were always there for each other, backing up one another through whatever the situation was. Rebekah herself didn't

have the easiest childhood, having grown up in an orphanage. It was why she was more than proud to say that she'd found a family in Richie Tozier. They once swore that they'd follow the other to the end of the world.

("I'm leaving, Bex. I couldn't take it anymore. I'm done. I want to live a normal life now. Will you come with me?")

Rebekah was the one who mentored Sabina, even though Charlie was the one who found her. Rebekah was Sabina's Edgar. She was thirty-eight and the girl was only twenty. The first time they met, Rebekah instantly zeroed in on those bright blue eyes. She could tell from those eyes alone that behind all the laughs and the jokes and the cheeky persona, Sabina had a lot of anger toward the world. She could have all the money in the world, but her parents never provided her what she really needed—the kind of love and attention that every child deserved to have. However, that wasn't the reason why Rebekah noticed Sabina's eyes. It was more because those eyes reminded them of her former friend's eyes, even though both Richie and Sabina looked nothing like one another.

It had been years, but Rebekah could still remember the man whom she'd loved more than she was brave enough to admit.

("We all gathered here to pay our respects to one of the bravest and most genuine men we all have ever had the honour to know – Richard Tozier.")

While she trained Sabina, Rebekah also went to check on the girl's records. Her wealthy family tried hard to hide it, but it didn't take Rebekah long to find Sabina's real birth-certificate *and* adoption papers. Her biological mother was a normal person who lived a normal life, currently married to a doctor with two children. Rebekah

visited the woman once, under the pretense of being a make up saleswoman, and although she seemed rather nice, it didn't change the fact that she'd *abandoned* poor Sabina right after she was born. The former Angel was half-tempted about throwing a bit of a prank on her, but changed her mind when she remembered how happy Sabina was now without that woman. Besides, Rebekah was more interested in finding out about Sabina's biological father.

There was nothing about him though. They left the name blank on Sabina's birth certificate. But something that trivial wouldn't deter Rebekah. With Charlie's help, which came after hours of literal begging, she managed to dig deep into the past of Sabina's biological mother. She dug so deep that she found out how the woman moved out from Derry, Maine when she was only eighteen, shortly after her graduation. Richie didn't talk much about his past, even under gun point. But Rebekah remembered a night when they were playing poker and used truths as their stakes, and how one of the truths Richie gave was about his hometown. Digging deeper, Rebekah found that Richie dated that woman in his senior year until the day she and her whole upped and left Derry.

Rebekah wouldn't need Elena's brain to figure out the rest.

"You okay, Boz?" Sabina said, snapping the former Angel out of her reverie.

And right away, Rebekah slipped right back into becoming Bosley.

"Sure, kid," the woman replied with a smile. They were on the back of jet, ready to jump off for their next mission. Jane and Elena had left already, leaving the mentor and her protegee.

Your father would have been so proud of you, kiddo.

"Alright then. Let's go, woman! Before you get any older!" Sabina said with a laugh, giving a mischievous wink before she jumped off the plane to catch up with Jane and Elena.

The older blonde watched the young woman whom she had loved almost like her own daughter chasing her friends in the air, her giggles rang loudly through the earpiece they all had. The sound brought a fond smile on her face, even though she could feel how heart almost literally ached as well.

Because, although she might not look much like her father, Sabina Wilson's pale blue eyes and her infectious laughter would always remind Rebekah of Richie Tozier.

Notes for the Chapter:

Feel free to leave me a comment and tell me what you think about the story so far :D

2. Chapter One

Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie's always been loyal. Especially for his best friends. This is why he does stupid and reckless things that he'll always regret in the end.

Notes for the Chapter:

Feel free to leave a comment, guys! :)

Eddie had worked for Pennywise Incorporated for many years as their head researcher. He had no idea how he managed to get their attention when he was only a fresh-graduate from UW Madison Pharmacy school. Sure, he graduated with a GPA of 3.95, but it didn't change the fact that there were literally *hundreds* of people applying to get into Pennywise Incorporated every year. He wasn't complaining though. Pennywise was probably one of the biggest companies in America, developing and producing all kinds of medicines for a great range of medical disciplines. So, they paid Eddie more than he'd ever need for four lifetimes. Sometimes, Eddie would wonder what the hell he should do with all the money in his account. But he really wasn't complaining. How could he? Life was good for him. He had everything a man his age ever wanted.

He was *lonely* though. Extremely so.

It was probably why he gave no fuck that he was making his first mistake *ever* since high school.

(“Runaway with me, Eds. Runaway with me. Please. I promise, I’ll take care of you.”)

Despite all the money he had, and his position that ranked fourth in line in the company, Eddie nearly had no work friends at all. Hell, he hadn't had a proper friend since he graduated out of high school; driving his late father's car to Wisconsin in the middle of the night without telling anyone, especially not his mother. And Eddie had been alone ever since. He knew it was his fault. He was never the easiest person to be friends with. He was a fussy hypochondriac with a foul mouth and an even fouler temper. He'd only ever dated twice, during his university years, which ended up so terribly, he'd sworn off dating altogether ever since. For the first decade, Eddie didn't mind it much. He was successful. He was living the life he'd dreamed off since he was a child. What more would he need when he practically had everything?

His only friend was Beverly Marsh, whom he met when literally by chance. People always wondered how in the world they became friends. She was the CEO *and* wife of Ben Hanscom, co-owner of Hanscom-Hanlon Architects, which was dubbed as one of the best architecture company in the country. There really was no way for the both of them to even cross path, but they did. Eddie ran into Beverly in a Starbucks, quite literally, because he was in a rush to a board meeting. Thankfully, he'd finished his coffee while he had his sandwich in there. Unfortunately though, Beverly hadn't, and he made her spilled her coffee on her expensive business suit. He could easily buy her a new one, but Eddie *could* be a gentleman if he wanted to, quite contrary to what most believed. So he offered to buy her lunch, and long story short, they found out that they got along really well and had been really close friends ever since.

But then he met Stanley Uris, and everything changed. Or, more like, he *re*-met Stanley. One of his childhood best friends.

("We'll always be best friends, right?")

("Fucking obviously, Stanniel. You can't get rid of me or Eds or Big Bill so easily.")

("Y-y-yes, Stan. You're s-s-stuck with us t-t-till the end.")

("Yeah! Once a Loser, always a Loser.")

Stanley was Lucian Pennywise's personal accountant, and he'd worked closely with the man far longer than Eddie had. The first time Eddie found out that his childhood best friend was purely by chance, pretty much like how he'd met Beverly. Eddie was in an elevator, on his way to his office while angrily texting his assistant for a mistake they'd made, when a hand stopped him from exiting. He was about to yell to whoever it was who'd dared to touch him, when he was met with a familiar face he hadn't seen for over two decades. He'd grown up, and sounded different too, but there was no denying that it was Stan the Man. They spent the next two minutes hugging and holding back tears in the elevator. They promised to have dinner then, and Eddie found out that even though they hadn't seen each other for ages, they still hit off really well.

Eddie was introduced to Stanley's wife and son when they had their dinner, which was at Stanley's home. Patricia was a beautiful blonde with calming blue eyes and a personality that complimented her husband. Their son Robbie was only ten, and he reminded Eddie of Stanley when he was that age because of how much he looked and acted like his father, except he had Patricia's eyes and smile. Ever since then, Eddie was a regular guest in the Uris household for the past two years. He'd come to visit the family at least every weekend for either lunch or dinner, and Robbie was always so happy to see his *Uncle Eds*. Despite the nickname that tugged at Eddie's heart a little painfully, the chemist loved the boy so much and would do anything for him.

Again, that was probably why he was being this stupidly reckless.

“Thanks for seeing me, Eddie,” Stanley said for the second time that day, since Eddie practically threw himself on the seat across him in a Starbucks.

The *same* Starbucks where he’d met Beverly.

“We’ve agreed we’ll keep it quiet until we’re sure it’s safe, Stan,” Eddie grumbled after he made sure his voice was low enough. “You were the one who told me to stay away from you and your family for sometime until we have gathered enough proof.”

“I know. But, I have no choice,” the other man said, and only then did Eddie realise something was wrong. Stanley was always tense, even when he was only with Eddie and his family. It was a leftover of his uptight parents’ influence. But this was a different kind of tense.

He seemed like he was *afraid*.

And Eddie understood perfectly. After all, he nearly had a panic attack when Stanley came up to him and told him about Pennywise’s secret dealings. For two decades Eddie had worked for Pennywise, but he’d never thought, not even once, that the company he’d worked for was dealing with *fucking child trafficking*. Yet that was the fact. Stanley had found out about it because he was really good at what he did. Really fucking good at it, in fact, to the point that he could discover that his boss had been doing the most heinous form of crime against humanity. They knew that someone like Lucian Pennywise wouldn’t take too kindly with them finding out his secret, even if

Eddie and Stanley were arguably two of his most important employees. So, the two best friends had agreed to keep quiet while they tried to find out more about it. That was how Eddie knew something horrible had happened to his friend.

“Stan, what’s wrong?” Eddie asked carefully. He reached forward to hold Stanley’s hand, and was worried when the man flinched. “You know you can talk to me, right? We’re on this together, man.”

Stanley looked up then, his eyes were brimming with tears as his face twisted in barely repressed anguish. He let out a choked sob before he spoke. “He found out, Eddie. *Pennywise*. He knew that I knew about his illegal dealings. And he’s threatened to kill Patty *and* s-sell Robbie to child prostitution.”

“Fucking hell,” Eddie breathed. He felt an up coming panic attack ready to happen, but he quickly tamped it down. Stanley needed him. He couldn’t afford to lose his shit now. Taking a deep breath, he said, “How did he find out?”

“Apparently, despite having worked personally for him for almost three decades since Pennywise Incorporated had just started, he’s never really trusted me,” Stanley explained. “He barged into my office the other day and told me that my computer activity has always been tracked since the day I first started working for him. Everything I do, from playing games to watching porn, he *knows*.”

“Jesus fucking Christ...” Eddie breathed out as pinched the bridge of his nose, suddenly feeling exhausted and drained.

If Pennywise had no qualms about selling innocent children, there was no doubt that he would make Stanley went through hell before he died a painful death. Hell, he probably wouldn't be allowed to die, forced to watch whatever horrible torture Pennywise would inflict on Stanley's family. Everyone knew that there were worse things than dying.

A sudden, terrifying thought came into Eddie's mind as he looked at his surrounding frantically, alarmed. He didn't want to believe it, but...

"Stanley," he slowly said, his heart beat picking up. "Stan, I want you to be honest with me. What else did he say? Did he offer you anything?"

It was only in a split second, but the guilt that flashed in Stanley's eyes answered everything.

"I'm sorry, Eddie," his best friend whispered, sounding even more miserable as a fresh of tears fell from his eyes. "He told me that if I gave him your name, he would leave Patricia and Robbie alone."

Eddie wanted to be mad. He wanted to yell at Stanley, to punch him in his stupid face and break his perfect nose. But he understood. He really did. Even though the thought that he'd die horribly terrified him out of his mind, Eddie knew that if he was in Stanley's position, he would the same thing. Stanley was like a brother to him, and that meant Patricia and Robbie had become his family too. He really couldn't imagine Patricia screaming her throat raw from whatever torture Pennywise would inflict on her. *Or worse*—to picture the life that little Robbie would have to go through.

“It’s alright, Stan,” Eddie said. “I understand. I really do. We’ve been through a lot together since we were fucking children. I know you wouldn’t rat me out if it weren’t for Patty and Robbie. I would do the same thing if I were you.”

Memories of him at age twelve with three other boys, wading through the sewer back in their hometown in Derry to find one, specific little boy, only to find the many corpses of children that had been missing too, invaded Eddie’s mind involuntarily. He hadn’t thought about that gruesome part of his childhood for almost thirty years, and the return of those memories nearly sent him spiraling into another round of panic attack. But again, Eddie pushed it aside. He had more pressing matters to deal with. He couldn’t afford a panic attack. Not now.

“They’re going to kill you,” Stanley said in a shaky voice. “A sniper would do it. Pop you right in your head. Pennywise said I had to get you to see me, so I could witness you die in front of me. He said...he said it’s my punishment.”

“*Oh, Stanley...*” Eddie whispered, feeling his heart break for his best friend despite his impending doom. “I’m sorry, man. I’m so sorry you’d have to see that.”

The accountant shook his head, giving Eddie a small, sad smile as he reached for Eddie’s hand. “Don’t say that. It’s *my* fault. I should be the one who’s sorry. And I really am, Eddie. I’m sorry for dragging you into this stupid mess I’ve made. I just... Those children were taken from their families, and I couldn’t help it. It’s not just Robbie. I uh...I thought of Georgie, and—“

Georgie Denbrough.

Little Georgie, who used to follow them around when his big brother Bill brought him along to play with the four friends. Georgie, who would come to Eddie whenever he scraped his knee because he knew Eddie always had strips of band-aids with him. Georgie, who would always ask Stanley to help him with his homework. Georgie, who idolised a certain lanky boy with huge glasses much to the amusement and dismay of the older Denbrough.

Georgie, who went missing when he was only five years old, and not even his body was found along with the corpses the four boys had stumbled into down in that fucking sewer.

“I told you, Stan; *it’s fine*. I understand,” Eddie said once again, offering his friend a reassuring smile as he squeezed the hand holding him before he leaned back on his seat. He looked around then, eyeing all the tall buildings he could see as if he could find the sniper who was going to shoot him. He let out a shaky breath before he spoke again. “So, when will it happen? When am I going to die?”

This caused Stanley to raise his eyebrows in a way that only he could, and Eddie was glad to see that look on his friend again. “For some one who grew up annoyingly neurotic, you’re oddly calm,” Stanley commented. “Who are you and what have you done to my best friend?”

The chemist couldn’t help himself when he let out a giggle. “I guess when Death is staring at you right in your face and you really can’t avoid it, you just stop panicking about it. I mean, it’s not like I can avoid it, right? Like, *literally*. I’m sitting in a public area, surrounded by tall buildings. A sniper can shoot me anytime.”

"Yeah, about that." Stanley looked down at his watch, a small frown on his face as he bit his lip. Eddie knew that look. It was the kind of look Stanley got when he realised something was wrong, yet if he planned it right, he could get something good from it.

"What?" Eddie asked right away. "What is it? What's wrong?"

Stanley looked a little hesitant before he answered him. "It's four past ten now."

"And? What about it?"

"I was told to get you here before ten, and they'll shoot you then. But it's *already* four past ten."

Eddie immediately got what Stanley meant. It had been four minutes and he wasn't dead yet. Something was definitely wrong, and hopefully, it was in their favour. Eddie didn't want to get his hopes high, but he couldn't help himself when he asked—

"Do you think they're late?" Eddie asked in a small voice. "Are snipers often late?"

"How the fuck should I know?" Stanley replied dryly, looking both amused and exasperated in a way that only he could. "It's not like I had snipers shooting my best friends every day."

"Hahaha, very funny. Seriously, if we ever survive this, you should consider a career as comedi—"

It all happened in a blink of an eye. One moment they were half-joking about their bleak situation, then the next thing Eddie knew there was a flash obnoxious purple jumped toward him and Stanley, tackling the both of them to the ground, causing people around them to scream. He felt his hip smarting at the harsh contact with the floor, and his breath was knocked out of his body when part of that same bright purple landed on top of him. It took Eddie awhile to realise that the big, yellow fury ball in his face was actually someone's head—some girl's head, to be precise. The girl looked like she was in her twenties, wearing fluffy purple sweater that must have been the atrocious purple he'd seen. She was pretty small, even compared to Eddie's average height. Before he could really comprehend what had happened though, the girl had moved off him, and was crouching over Stanley.

Stanley, whose light-blue shirt had a red stain on his chest, just an inch below his heart. Almost instantly, Eddie was snapped back into focus, and he quickly went to check on his best friend. He nudged the girl aside with his shoulder, and took off his suit jacket and used it to press on Stanley's wound. He could feel it getting wet from all the blood really fast.

"You two stay right here, okay?" the girl said before she went off toward the man with a mullet that Eddie assumed had tried to kill him, not giving Eddie a chance to answer her.

"Who the fuck is that?" Stanley rasped, his face scrunching up in pain. "She...she looked f-familiar—*fuck, it hurts.*"

"Dunno, Stan. But just...stop talking, okay? Preserve your energy, and you'll be fine."

"*Fucking bitch!*" mullet-man howled, and Eddie turned his head right on time to see the blonde pulled a big knife back from where she'd swiped it on the man's chest, making a shallow gash.

"Yeah, yeah," the blonde drawled monotonously as she twirled the knife between her fingers. "I know what I am, shithead. And this bitch is gonna kill you."

Eddie didn't know whether Stanley saw what happened next, but Eddie felt his jaw dropped when the girl's lips tugged into a familiar grin before she threw the knife forcefully at mullet-man, causing the man to stagger back from the force of it. Eddie was barely paying attention to what happened next to the fight between the two of them because *that grin*. That fucking crooked, cheeky grin. He had seen that grin countless times in the past before, but on someone else's face. He'd seen it on the face of a boy he'd known since he was three, and had grown up together until the day they went on their separate ways after graduating high school. It was the grin that had haunted him dreams every night, especially in the past fifteen years since he heard about the *tragedy* that had happened. When he broke down after he realised that he would *never* see that grin ever again.

("Eddie, my love, I love you so. How I've waited for you, you'll never know. Please, Eddie, don't make me wait too long. Eddie, please, write me one line...")

It had been twenty years since they last talked, but Eddie could still

hear *his* voice.

Eddie snapped out of his reverie when he heard a loud crash coming from where the blonde and mullet-man were. Judging from the way she was pushing herself off the floor, the man had just thrown her off him. It didn't seem to deter her though. The girl just shrugged it off, quite literally, and went to wrap her arms around the man's neck to help her launched herself on to the man's shoulder. The movement caught the man off guard that he barely had time to blink before the girl sent a barrage of relentless punches onto his face. That seemed to do the trick because the man soon fell backward as he lost his consciousness, his face covered in blood and bruises. The girl was quick enough to jump off him though so he wouldn't bring her down with him. She spent about ten seconds eyeing the unconscious man until she was sure that he wouldn't wake up anytime soon. She gave a nod to herself once before she went back to Eddie and Stanley.

"Hi, sorry about that," the girl quipped in a cheerful tone, as if she hadn't just beat the fuck out of a man twice her size. "That fucking mullet-wearing asshole was a mean son of a bitch. Taking him down wasn't as easy as I expected it to be." She then took a quick glance at Stanley before she carefully pulled him off the floor. It still hurt Stanley though, causing him to let out a pained cry that she replied with a sheepish look. "Sorry about that, man. But we have to get out of here before more of those assholes like him can come. I'm Sabina, by the way. Sabina Wilson."

"He-hello Sabina. I'm Stan...Stanley Uris," the accountant muttered, his short and erratic breathing nearly caused another round of panic attack for Eddie. "This...this neurotic chihuahua is my friend Eddie Kasp- Kaspbrak."

"Fuck off, Uris," Eddie snapped, though he could feel his lips tugged

into a slight grin as he wrapped Stanley's other arm around himself. "Trust you to suddenly have a sense of humour when we're both about to die."

Stanley's huffed out harshly when both the blonde named Sabina and Eddie started to drag him out of Starbucks, and Eddie couldn't help but to wonder whether it was from his patented Condescending Uris Scoff, or because he was in so much pain. "My humour is always there, Edward. You just...you just never understand it."

"As funny as your joke is, old man, no one's dying on my watch," Sabina said firmly with a kind of determination that once again felt familiar. Eddie decided then to turn his attention on her.

"I don't mean to be rude, but who are you, kid?" Eddie asked, running his eyes all over the girl's features as if it would give him an answer on *why* she looked so much like someone he knew. He felt a tug in his chest when he saw the way her eye glinted in mischief.

"Well, Mr Kaspbrak, as I've said before, my name—"

"*Don't* even think about it," Eddie growled, realising his mistake immediately. "I fucking know that look on your face, young lady. I have seen it before on another person, and trust me, they were—"

Once again, Eddie's words were cut off rather violently when Sabina pushed him to the side. This time though, she was pushing Stanley into his arms, settling the taller man's whole weight on Eddie as she pulled out a gun from the back pocket of her leather pants—and had pointed it straight at someone standing just five feet away from them.

Eddie took one look at the calculative glare in Sabina's eyes before he turned toward the direction of her opponent. It was a man, who was easily over six feet tall. He was dressed in all black, and if things had been different, Eddie would have chuckled at how cliché he was dressed. The man too had a gun in his hand, pointed straight at Sabina. With the gun half covering his face, Eddie didn't immediately recognise who he was, especially with the hat covering the other half of the man's face. But when he got closer, there was no denying who he was. Eddie knew him. He would *always* know him. Even after all those years. It could be twenty years or twenty *centuries*, but Eddie still remembered him.

"Richie?"

3. Chapter Two

Summary for the Chapter:

It's been twenty two years since Richie last saw his best friends. And still he'll sacrifice his life for them. But with his secrets finally catching up to him, he just doesn't know whether he'll be able to or not

Notes for the Chapter:

Feel free to leave a comment, guys :)

Back when Richie was a child, whenever anyone asked him what did he want to be when he grew up, he would say a comedian. Then people would nod their heads and say that it was good that he wanted to be an actor. Richie would always correct them. Sure, being an actor was nice and all. But actors didn't always make people laugh. A *comedian* did that. And all Richie wanted to do in life was to make people laugh. That was his dream. He knew that his parents didn't really approve it, but they weren't entirely against it either. Wentworth and Maggie Tozier might not be the perfect parent that Arlene Hanscom was, but they did love their son greatly. Even though they were too busy with work most of the time, there was no denying that they would do everything for Richie. And if that meant supporting him and his risky choice of career, then so be it.

But then, Georgie Denbrough went missing, and everything changed.

("When I'm finally out of here, I'll find away to avenge Georgie. I promise, Bill.")

Richie had no idea how exactly it happened, but he went through CIA training at eighteen, and by the time he was twenty five, he had become one of the best agent at the time.

"Yes, hello?" Richie said, answering the call he'd receive as he propped his Barrett M95 against the wall in front of him.

"Miles," the voice in his earpiece said, and Richie couldn't help himself from flinching at the fake name he'd chosen to be his for the past fifteen years. "I suppose you're already in position."

"Well yeah. You said I have to pop the guy at ten. So, I'm here before ten. But," Richie trailed a bit, sighing in annoyance for he was going to have an argument that they'd had countless times already. "*You know* that you don't have to call me to check whether I'm doing my job or not. We've talked about this, man. You give me a job, and I'll do it."

"I know," Lucian Pennywise replied calmly. "But this time, I need to be here. Well, figuratively, at least. Consider it as a moral support."

If the man hadn't practically saved Richie's life fifteen years ago, and paid him disgustingly *huge* amount of money every time he was told to kill someone, he'd have blown Pennywise's head years ago. That man was fucking irritating.

"Fine. Just shut up and don't distract me. I can see your guy coming in now. The one in light-blue shirt, right? By the way, next time make sure they're wearing a more specific shirt. Fuckers."

Richie had to give it to him; Pennywise did a great job ignoring his comment. "Yep, that's the one. Don't kill him though. Kill his friend."

The shorter one. He should be there soon."

The mercenary rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Shut up now. Someone's coming. I think it's him."

Pennywise was finally silent and Richie focused himself on his task. One look at his watch told him that he had about fifteen minutes before he was supposed to kill his target. He turned his attention back on the man he was supposed to kill, who had taken a seat across from the blue-shirt guy. Like Pennywise said, the target was shorter than his friend, even when he was sitting down. He was wearing a red polo, which made it even easier for Richie to mark him because he stood up like a sore thumb. Richie had already set the rifle's focus on the back of the target's head, and was just waiting for his alarm to beep, when his eyes caught the face of the blue-shirt man.

Curly hair, high cheekbones and pointy nose. Richie couldn't see the man's eyes, but even from where he was, he knew they were dark brown with a constantly sharp and calculative look in them. There was only one man that Richie knew who looked like that, and even if it had been years, he knew exactly who that could be.

("Of course, I'll come to your bar mitzvah, Stanny! It's not every day your best friend becomes a proper Jewish adult and gets celebrated for finally owning up to their sins.")

"The guy in the blue shirt," Richie said in his calmest, most quiet voice, even if it wavered a little at the end. "What is his name?"

"I beg your pardon?" Pennywise asked in return, sounding just the

perfect amount of confused. But Richie knew better.

Pennywise was as brilliant an actor as he was a brilliant business man.

"*Goddammit, Lucian,*" Richie snarled as he felt his patience wearing thin. "Don't you fucking play dumb with me. Tell me his fucking name!"

There was a beat of silence before he heard Pennywise's soft cackle. The sound sent a cold chill down the mercenary's spine. "Oh, I think you already know, *Richie.*"

Time felt like stopping around him. Richie had to take two quick, calming breaths before he spoke again. "What the *fuck* did you just say, man?"

"Richard Wentworth Tozier," Pennywise said in a sing-song tone, and this time, when he cackled, it had had taken up a notch in its insanity. "Fondly dubbed as Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier by your friends. Only son to dentists Wentworth and Margaret Tozier, and younger brother to Olivia Margaret Tozier. Shall I continue?"

"How the hell—"

"I have my ways." Even without seeing him, Richie knew the man was smirking in that creepy way the mercenary had seen a couple times before. "But don't you want to know *who* your target is?"

Richie didn't have to ask. Nor did Pennywise have to supply him with a name as an answer. For the target had turned around, his face was point and centre on the focus of Richie's rifle. For the second time that day, time felt like stopping around him, and there was a ringing in his hear as his eyes zeroed in on the man's face. Richie knew him. More than he knew himself. His mind went through all the memories he had of the two of them back when they were children. The man looked older, but nothing much changed from his face. Looking at him now, Richie still felt the urge to pinch his cheek and cry out *cute cute!*

("Eddie, my love, I love you so. How I've waited for you, you'll never know. Please, Eddie, don't make me wait too long. Eddie, please, write me one line...")

"You know him, don't you, Rich?" Pennywise practically hissed, a manic glee in his voice. "Better than you know the other one, I bet."

Richie growled under his breath and started to dismantle his gun. "*Fuck off.* I'm not doing this shit. You must be dumb as shit if you thought I wouldn't recognise my own friends."

"Richie, Richie, Richie... You think I didn't know that? Buddy, I *knew* that you were never going to do it. Just like I know that you're going to save them now. That's why I put Bowers there."

"You did *what*?" Richie snatched his binocular from his bag, and true enough, he saw a familiar figure with a mullet making his way toward the two men.

Pennywise continued. "Henry Bowers might be...what did you say again? *Dumb as shit*, yeah, that's it—but *hey!* At least Bowers is obedient. I know that he'll kill your friends before you can get—"

Richie hung up, yanked the bag with his rifle in it, and swung it over his shoulder before he made his way down the rooftop. As he ran as fast as he could, he punched the mute button to the other line he had that was connected, and immediately he yelled out, "*Kid!* Did you hear all that?"

"Well, yeah," the new voice in his earpiece said, sounding a little distressed. "Shit, man. We're in deep shit. What are we going to do about this?"

"We'll talk about that later. Now, I need you to get the car."

"Hold up. We're taking *them* with us?"

"Yeah. See you in a few."

"Richie, wait—"

He cut off the call and barged out of the building, pushing past people who gave him a funny look at the way he practically ran through the door instead of opening it first. Richie didn't give a fuck. All he had in mind was to get across and to the Starbucks, where he

saw other customers and even the workers had run out from. He urged his feet to run faster when his eye caught a small blonde going head to toe against Henry Bowers, yet no vision on his target and the friend. There was something about the way she fought that seemed familiar to Richie, but he pushed the thought aside quickly. When he finally saw the two men again, the blonde had just taken Bowers down with her punches.

The three of them were soon making their way out of the café, walking closely with the blonde and Richie's target helping blue-shirt guy. Richie skidded into a sudden stop when he saw the blood stain on that blue-shirt, missing the man's heart just by a couple inches to the left. He only snapped out of it when the bell above the door rang as the blonde pushed it opened so they could get out of the ruined establishment. Richie slowly approached them, his eyes never leaving the two men who were now bickering like the idiots he remembered them to be. If it weren't because of his training that was ingrained deep in his brain, he wouldn't have noticed the petite blonde noticing him. He was half awed at the speed the girl showed between shoving the two men aside and pulling her gun out at Richie. Again, he felt a sense of *dè javu* at the familiarity of her movement, even as he pointed his own gun at her. Before either Richie or the blonde could say anything, his target had beat them to it.

"Richie?"

("Richie? Richie, are you awake? Can I stay here with you tonight?")

"Hey, Eds," Richie said carefully. He watched with fascination as a myriad of emotion flashed in those big, brown eyes.

Shock, disbelief, joy, disappointment despair, and *rage*.

That last one came so strongly, the mercenery was mesmerised by the intensity of it. He was so captivated by the look in those eyes, Richie was caught completely off guard when Eddie Kaspbrak threw his fucking phone at him, landing right on Richie's forehead rather forcefully. The blonde let out a whistle at the sight, which faltered instantly when Eddie shot her a glare. Beside the shorter man, Stanley Uris snorted an amused chuckle despite his injury.

"*Hey, Eds?* That's the best you could do? You fucking *asshole!*" Eddie yelled, shoving Stanley back into the blonde's arms before he marched toward Richie. "And how many times do I have to tell you, dipshit? Do *not* fucking call me 'Eds'!"

Richie didn't even have time to duck when Eddie gave him a mean right hook. He let the other man's fist socked him in the nose, the force was enough to cause Richie to stagger back. It didn't hurt that bad though, not when he compared it to the punches he was used to. He didn't even realise his nose was bleeding until a drop of it slipped into his mouth and he tasted the familiar copper tang of it. And that made Richie laughed. A full-bodied, soul relieving kind of laugh that brought tears into his eyes.

"Oh, how I *missed* you Eddie Spaghetti," he chuckled as he wiped his blood away. Even with Eddie glaring murderously at him, his fist clenched in a position to punch Richie again, he could only smile fondly at the shorter man.

"You fucking—"

Eddie's words were cut off abruptly at the screeching sound of tires as

a van skidded into a halt right in front of them. The front passenger door slammed opened, revealing a young man around the blonde's age on the driver's seat. The young man quirked an eye brow at scene in front of him, his eye no doubt focused on the blood rolling down Richie's nose.

"What the fuck happened to you, Uncle?" he said, prompting Richie to roll his eyes in exaggeration. Deciding to be a wise adult for once, he went to Stanley's side and gently nudged the blonde aside so he could take care of his best friend.

"Fucking shut up, Adrian," Richie grumbled, giving the younger man a warning glare that he obeyed grudgingly. The mercenary huffed out a bit when Eddie suddenly let go of Stanley, which meant that Richie had to practically carry Stanley into the van because at the point, the man had lost too much blood. And while Stanley wasn't as tall as Richie, he sure was pretty fucking heavy.

"*That's* Adrian?" Eddie exclaimed in disbelief as he quickly helped Richie again once he realised what he'd done. "Little Adrian? Libby's boy?"

"Fuck off, old man. I'm actually taller than you," Adrian spat, pouting in a way that made him looked even younger than his twenty five years. Richie allowed the split second his mind took to remember how enamoured seventeen-year-old Eddie was with newborn Adrian.

It was, and would always be, the cutest thing Richie had ever seen.

Before Eddie could retort back, Richie quickly said, "Yep. That's

Adrian Mellon, my nephew. Kid, I don't suppose you remember them so, let me to introduce you to Eduardo and Stanthony. They're my best friends since I was still cute... Right, now we're through with that; Eds, you sit here with Stan, okay? Make sure he doesn't die."

"Y-you're hila...hilarious," Stanley spat, but it lacked much of the usual bite.

"Shut up, Uris," Eddie said as he obediently went to sit beside their friend, one hand still pressed on Stanley's wound.

"Right. All set? Let's go then—"

"Wait! I'm *not* leaving without them, dude!" Blondie yelled, yanking Richie by his shoulder to turn him around just when he was about to close the door on Eddie and Stanley. "I have orders to take them somewhere safe. And if you think that I'll just let you go, then you're dumber than you look."

Richie aimed his most infuriating look of disinterest at her, hoping that she'd be insulted enough to leave. Crossing his arms as he cocked an eyebrow, he said, "That's exactly where I'm taking them. I appreciate what you did back there, but I can take it from here."

Whatever rude thing the blonde was going to say to him was cut off the moment Adrian peered from over his shoulder. Richie couldn't really see it, but he knew his nephew, so he could imagine his eyes widened into epic proportion when he yelled, "*Sabina?* Sabina Wilson? *Gosh*, is that really you?"

The blonde turned toward the sound, and her jaw dropped in surprise. "Adrian? What the hell are you doing with this guy?"

Adrian shrugged. "The idiot happens to be my uncle. And oh, my mentor too."

"Watch it, kid," Richie said in a warning tone, glaring at Adrian.

"Oh, wow. I never thought I'd see the day Richie Tozier scolding someone else for running their mouth," Eddie quipped sarcastically, earning a weak chuckle from a barely lucid Stanley.

"Get fucked, you fucking—"

"Did you just say he's Richie Tozier?" Sabina said, an unreadable look on her face now.

Eddie blinked once at the interruption. "Uh, yes. Yes, I did."

The girl turned to Richie then. "And you're *really* him? Richie Tozier the CIA agent?"

"I'm sorry— he's a *what*?"

"Former agent," Richie said, ignoring Eddie's shocked outburst as he eyed Sabina closely. "How did you know that?"

Now that he had a proper look at her, she did seem familiar. Like, *a lot*. Had they met? Did he know her from somewhere?

She ignored him though. Nodding to herself, she suddenly got into the car, squeezing herself on Stanley's other side. "Never mind that. All of you're coming with me. I'll tell you where we're headed as we go. But we need to leave now. My friends said we have twenty people coming in five."

"Now, hold up for a sec," Richie said, even as he got into the front passenger seat. "We're not going anywhere with you until you tell me exactly who the fuck you are."

"No time, man. Adrian, hit it."

"Don't do it, Adrian."

"Adrian, you believe me, right? Hit the fucking gas."

"Don't you dare, kid. Uncle or not, I'm still your fucking mentor so you—"

"Fucking floor it, Adrian!"

“You better lift your foot off the—“

"Goddammit— *Bex said hi!*"

("Rebekah Montgomery speaking. If you're anyone other than Tozier, please leave a message after the beep. And if it's you, Rich, fuck off and please stop leaving me shit messages, you fucking prick.")

“Fuck,” Richie exhaled, running a shaky hand over his hair. “Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!”

“I’m sorry, but *who* is Rebekah?” Eddie asked, which Richie ignored because he really didn’t feel like answering questions about his past yet.

Another person you owe an explanation, asshole, a voice in Richie’s head said, which annoyingly sounded like a thirteen year old Stanley Uris. Bastard was always the annoying voice of reason for Richie, literally and figuratively.

“Does that mean what I think it is?” Adrian asked Richie slowly, even as he restlessly eyed the rearview mirror, where Richie could see that five cars were headed their way.

“Yeah, do as Blondie says. Go to wherever the fuck she directs us.”

Adrian clicked his tongue and shrugs. "Alright then. Everyone hold on. Expect getting shot at."

Eddie gave a bewildered squeak, but no one responded to his shock. Adrian didn't waste his time and quickly speed away to the direction Sabina gave them. It didn't take long before the first round of bullets rained on them. Cursing under his breath, Richie reached under his seat for his M4AI, checked the rounds in it before cocking it. He popped open the overhead window, ready to get out there so he could shoot at those motherfuckers. But then he noticed that Sabina seemed to be in a conversation with whoever it was she had speaking through her earpiece, the whole time she was looking for a refill for her Glock before cursing under her breath when she found out she had known. Richie took a pity on her and threw his own stash of bullets, earning a shocked look from her. When she opened her mouth, he knew that she was going to thank him, but he quickly cut her off. The situation reminded him of his past, back when he knew another badass blonde who always had problems with not bringing an extra round of refill.

("Tozier, I'm out! Tozier! Tozier! Tozier, a little help!")

("Fucking hell, Bex! Here! Next time, don't fucking forget it!")

He was going to go up once again, but something changed his mind. Turning toward the blonde, he tapped at his own ear, referring to her earpiece and said, "Is she talking to you right now?"

Sabina nodded her head stiffly, a little distracted as she was refilling her gun. "Yeah, she is. And I don't know what the hell you've done to her, man, but she's *pissed*. Like, royally."

Stanley snorted a laugh then, despite his weakening condition. “Rich...Richie has always had that tal-talent. He always pisses... pisses off everyone.”

The blonde let out a chuckle that sounded *so fucking familiar*. “Is that so, man? Well, good luck on staying alive when you see her then.” She didn’t wait for a respond before she rolled her window down and started to shoot at their incomings at the same time Adrian made a sharp twist to avoid getting rammed by one of the thugs’ cars.

Richie rolled his eyes even as he felt his lips tugged into a grin. “Fuck off, you two. Especially *you*, Stan Urine. Just try to stay alive, okay? Don’t you dare die in my fucking van, man.”

“W-will do, Trashmouth...”

“And Eddie?”

The chemist whipped his head around from watching the up coming cars to look back at Richie, with his big doe-eyes. He looked so much like the thirteen year old Richie used to protect against bullies as he said, “Yeah, Chee?”

God, he’s still so fucking cute!

“Keep your head down, and make sure the same goes for Stan. Try not to get shot while I’m shooting at those bastards.”

“Easier said than done, asshole,” Eddie spat, but judging from the way he bit his lip, Richie knew he was fighting back a grin.

“Well then.” He gave his best friends a wink before he poked his head out of the overhead. “Talk to you again in awhile, Losers. I have some motherfuckers to kill.”

4. Chapter 3

Summary for the Chapter:

Sabina learns about the man that her mentor values above all else.

Notes for the Chapter:

Feel free to tell me what do you think of the story so far :D

The first time Sabina heard of the name Richie Tozier, it was back when she was still training as an Angel. It was during her week end break, just several months before she got her Tattoo and became a proper Angel. She was wandering around the compound as she nursed a mug of hot chocolate that Kay McCall had made her when she walked passed the compound's bar and heard a loud crash. No one was allowed to visit the bar unless it was the week ends, and even then they weren't allowed to trash it in a drunken rage. So, Sabina thought it was only natural if she got curious. Someone had broken a rule after all. A rule that she, who was a former delinquent, had to swear on her life to *and* signed an actual legal agreement that she would never break. She had no idea whoever was on the other side of the door, but Sabina made sure she was ready to dodge rogue bottles when she pushed the door opened.

Rebekah was in there, drunk out of her mind as she sobbed into Beverly Marsh's arms.

Sabina had never met Beverly, but she knew that she, along with Rebekah and Kay, used to be in a team together when they were around Sabina's age. Before Rebekah became the first Bosley, before Beverly went to retire and play normal family with her husband, and before Kay decided that she was better off designing guns until the day the Saint came to replace her. During the months she trained

under Rebekah, Sabina had only ever heard Beverly mentioned in passing, whenever she overheard Rebekah and Kay talked about their olden days. Therefore, seeing Beverly there was understandably a surprise for her. It was nothing as surprising as the fact that Rebekah was drunk though. In all the months Sabina knew her mentor, the older blonde was always poised and a little bit detached. She was always in perfect control of *everything*. Never, not in a million years, Sabina thought she'd see the day her mentor as a drunken, sobbing mess.

The short-haired blonde instantly felt bad that she'd walked in on such a private scene, so she quickly tried to leave the room. But then, that was when she heard Beverly mentioned *his* name.

"It's been ten years, honey. I think it's high time you move on from Richie Tozier," Beverly said patiently as she stroked Rebekah's blonde locks. "You can't keep this up anymore."

Sabina didn't hear Rebekah's answer. She had left before she could. And she never mentioned anything about what she'd heard to Rebekah or anyone else. She didn't even think about that day or the name Richie Tozier for a long, *long* time.

Not until Eddie Kaspbrak did.

Unfortunately, Rebekah overheard what Eddie had had said through Sabina's earpiece.

And she *wasn't* happy about it.

(“Motherfucker! Fucking— FUCK! Tell him when I see him, I’m going to wring him by his stupid neck and fling him across the room. That fucking asshole! I’m going to fucking kill that tall asshole. And I’m gonna make his death fucking painful he’s going to fucking regret – AH, I NEED MARSH! SOMEONE, FUCKING CALL BEVERLY MAR—”)

Sabina had never heard Rebekah that angry before, not even last year, when they were dealing with the whole Bosley-Brok fiasco.

They managed to get to her team’s assigned HQ in what Sabina liked to consider as a record time, especially with the Pennywise’s men at their tail. Luckily for everyone, Sabina had her bitches backing her up—not that she’d *ever* call Jane and Elena her bitches in their faces. Especially not in front Jane. Elena might be okay with that, because unlike *some* people, that genius had humour. Jane, on the other hand? *Nope*. That tall, English brat would fucking punch Sabina in the face if she ever found out. The blonde didn’t have time to greet her friends though once they got to the HQ, because Eddie had started screaming that they were losing Stanley, and that was just *bad*. They were supposed to protect both men, and asked them questions as they did that. They couldn’t afford one of them dying. So before Adrian’s van had even stopped, Sabina had jumped out to tell the Saint to ready the med-bay. She didn’t even have time to be surprised when she found that the man had everything ready, with four of the Agency’s own doctors flanking him, all of them were also ready to do their work. Clearly Rebekah had told everyone about what happened, despite her temper-tantrum.

When Sabina went back out of the med-bay and to what essentially was the HQ’s lobby, Adrian and Jane had taken over the task of carrying Stanley from Eddie. When the blonde craned her neck around to find the chemist, she found him on the floor just a few feet away from her, sitting between Richie’s legs as he cupped the shorter man’s face in his hands. She knew right away that Eddie was having

a panic attack. After all, she'd had to calm Adrian down many times from his own bouts of panic attack back when they were in high school. In fact, she found it rather weird that she and Richie handle their friends' panic attacks in the same way. But, at the same time, she noticed there was something different in the way Richie held Eddie. There was a certain gentleness there, and a *loving* intimacy that Sabina and Adrian didn't have. Sure, the feisty asthmatic idiot was her oldest and closest friend, someone she'd even call her *family*. However, it was clear that whatever Richie and Eddie had, it was different. She could see it in the way Eddie buried his face in the crook of Richie's neck, in the way Richie curled protectively around the other man with one hand clasped at the back of Eddie's neck.

"Oh, wow," Elena breathed, who Sabina hadn't realised had been standing beside her the whole time, her dark eyes glued on the romantically intimate sight in front of them.

'Oh, wow', indeed.

"They're so disgustingly in love, I know," Adrian's voice came from Sabina's other side, eyes also set on his uncle and said uncle's *friend*. It was only then did Sabina realise that he and Jane had returned from dropping Stanley at the med-bay. She noticed that Jane too was watching Richie and Eddie.

"You know about this?" Sabina asked her oldest friend, to which the young CIA agent responded with a mere shrug of his shoulders.

"I mean, I *know* that he's been in love with someone for almost all the time I know him. I just didn't know who the person was. Hell, I didn't even know he was gay."

“He’s bisexual, although he *has* been in love with the same man for practically his whole life.”

Sabina and her three friends jumped in surprise then, whipping around almost in unison to find Rebekah standing behind them with a blank look on her face. From the corner of her eyes, Sabina could see that Jane and Elena were surprised that Rebekah knew who Richie and Eddie were. Adrian was the only one who didn’t look surprised, and was watching Rebekah closely and silently. If Rebekah felt bothered by it, she did a great job ignoring him. Instead, she walked around the four of them and made her way toward Richie and Eddie. At the sound of her heels clicking against the floor, the two men slowly pulled away from each other. Eddie seemed to have recovered from his panic attack, and judging by the blush on his face, he’d finally realised that he had an audience the whole time. His eyes quickly found Rebekah’s figure coming toward him and Richie as he brought himself onto his feet. When Richie offered him his hand, the chemist stiffly shook his head and took a step back. Sabina couldn’t see how Richie reacted to the rejection. The man had turned around at the same time Rebekah stopped right in front of him, blocking him for everyone’s view.

Before she sucker punched him on his nose.

“FUCK!” Richie yelled loudly, one hand holding his nose that had started to bleed already. “What the fuck, Bex? Didn’t you see I already got punched in the nose? Fucking lunatic.”

The furious growl Rebekah let out was almost inhuman, Sabina felt chills ran down her spine. “You should be grateful I didn’t kill you instead, *Tozier*. After that fucking *stunt* you pulled fifteen years ago,

killing you would have been a mercy you don't deserve, you fucking *dick*."

"Oh my God," Eddie said before Richie could give a reply. The chemist was looking back and forth between his tall friend and Rebekah before settling on Sabina's mentor. "He pretended to have died to you too? I thought, since he turned out to be a former CIA agent, and I'm only a civilian, he only did that to me."

"Nope," Rebekah said, voice trembling a little in the telltale of her anger. "And I was there when he supposedly had died. I was in that fucking train we were trying to stop together when he threw me out and decided to be a *fucking hero*."

"If I hadn't pushed you out, you would have died that day, Bex," Richie said dryly as he wiped the blood off his face in an infuriating, nonchalant manner. "I had to choose between saving your life or having us both killed. It was an easy choice for me."

"But you *didn't* die, asshole!" Rebekah yelled. "Somehow, you managed to survive the crash and let us all lived for the past fifteen years thinking you were dead. Fuck, with that fucking *nuclear bomb* in that train, I *know* you should have blown up into pieces! No, cross that. All of fucking *Chicago* should have blown up that day! What the fuck did you do?"

Richie muttered something that no one but Rebekah and Eddie, who were close to him, could hear. And whatever it was, Sabina knew it was monumentally stupid because Rebekah looked she was itching to punch Richie again, and Eddie looked like he was going to have a heart attack.

“You did *what*?” Eddie exclaimed, stomping right into Richie’s space, turning the man around so they were face to face.

“I swallowed the bomb, okay?” Richie sighed, his tone awfully casual as if he were only talking about the weather. “I mean, it was only the size of a pill. So, I thought I’d just swallow it to prevent it from exploding when the train crashed.”

Sabina didn’t know whether she should be impressed or horrified.

Taking a glance at her mentor and her friends, all of them seemed just as shocked.

Not Eddie though.

He looked incredibly red in the face, rage clearly visible in his eyes even from where Sabina was standing. He had one opened palm over his right ear as he stared at Richie in disbelief. “You swallowed... You fucking swallowed—WHAT THE ACTUAL *FUCK*, RICHIE? YOU SWALLOWED A *NUCLEAR* BOMB? ARE YOU FUCKING DUMB? NO, DON’T ANSWER THAT. I’VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT DESPITE YOUR HIGH IQ, YOU ARE A FUCKING IDIOT. BUT, I DIDN’T THINK YOU WERE INSANE TOO!”

“Hold up!” Richie shouted, and he had the gall to look offended. “It worked, didn’t it? Nothing exploded! Well, except for the train. Which I managed to survive. Thankfully, only the locomotive blew up, and the bomb was in the car farthest from it when I went to get

it. I *still* nearly died, yes, but I—“

“Tell me *one* good reason why you never told anyone that you’re alive all along,” Rebekah said, cutting Richie off. “Or else I’ll fucking take back what I said and stab you with my knife. You know, the knife *you* gave me as a birthday present. And *don’t* fucking lie about it, ‘cause I’ll know.”

Sabina knew *exactly* which knife her mentor was talking about, because that knife had been in her possession since the day she’d officially become an Angel.

(“This knife was a birthday gift from the greatest person I’d ever had the honour to know. But I want you to have it. And remember to always be true to yourself. Remember why we’re Angels, kid.”)

It was quite some time before Richie spoke again. The whole time he was silent and considering his answer, Sabina noticed how freakishly devoid of emotion he was. The blonde knew right then and there that he’d made a deal with the devil fifteen years ago when let the world believed he was dead, and that both Rebekah and Eddie wouldn’t like that. He was clenching his jaw so hard, Sabina was worried he’d break it by the time he finally spoke.

“Pennywise rescued me. Or rather, his men did. At the time, I didn’t really care why he’d rescued me, or why he was even there in the first place. I was in *so much pain*. I think I’d broken practically every bone in my body, and I did just swallow a pill-sized nuclear bomb. I wouldn’t recommend doing that to anyone, by the way. According to Pennywise’s doctors, the bomb was *literally* burning my insides by the time they’d cut me opened to get it out.”

Sabina couldn't help herself when she shuddered involuntarily, her mind could only imagine how fucking painful it must have been.

"How are you still alive then?" Eddie asked carefully, his big eyes widened into epic proportions, clearly horrified at the idea of the pain Richie had suffered. "If that was true, you could have died, Chee."

Something about the way Eddie said his nickname made Richie relaxed as he gave the shorter man a small smile. "I did die. Pennywise told me I died twice on the operating table. He said they had to give me this special drug to bring me back. It was kind of like an adrenaline shot, but safer and less risky and more...reliable."

"He gave you my Spaghetti shot," Eddie whispered, looking extremely pleased with himself as a wide smile took over the worried look on his face.

"I'm sorry, but did I hear that right?" Richie said. There was a mischievous grin on his face, which prompted a scowl from Eddie.

"It was a prototype that should have never been given to anyone, so forgive me for the horrible name. I was only given an hour to think of a name before I had to present it. They decided against mass-producing it though. It costs too much manufacturing it, surprisingly. Also, we couldn't get the pass to have it tested on a human. So yeah."

"Hate to point it out to you, but it doesn't explain *why* exactly you've named it that, Eds."

“I *told* you, don’t fucking call me—“

“Richie, focus,” Rebekah said. “You haven’t told us why you didn’t tell anyone you’ve been alive this whole time.”

Richie sobered up and nodded solemnly. “Right. I’m sorry. Well, Pennywise threatened me. He said I had to work for him for twenty years at least, to repay his sodding kindness for saving my life, or else he’d go after people I care about. I never told him my real name, lest it would make it easier for him to find my family and friends. But I didn’t want to take any chances. I don’t mind dying, but I don’t think I can stand losing anyone I love. So yeah, I’ve been working for him for the past fifteen years, taking out people that had betrayed him. That was our agreement. I only killed people who had betrayed him. When he wanted to kill innocents, he gave the job to someone else.”

The way he said it was so flippant, but no one missed what he’d tried to say. Least of all Eddie, who was now looking at Richie with fear and betrayal in his eyes.

“It was you,” Eddie said quietly. “You were the one who was supposed to kill me.”

It looked like it physically pained the mercenary when he nodded. When Eddie took a step away from him again, Richie quickly grabbed his hand and looked at the chemist imploringly. “I couldn’t do it though. I promise you, Eds, I wouldn’t have shot you *or* Stan. When I realised it was you two, I told Pennywise I couldn’t do it. I *didn’t* want to do it.”

“So if it were somebody else, you’d have done it?” Eddie spat, his voice rising. “If someone else had found out about the child trafficking, someone other than me and Stan, you’d have killed them?”

“*Child trafficking?*” Richie almost shouted, looking shocked and disgusted. “What do you mean ‘child trafficking’, Eds?”

“I meant exactly what I said, you fuckwad. The reason why Pennywise wanted to get rid off me and Stanley was because we’d found out about his fucking disgusting dealings. For fuck’s sake, Chee; that monster kidnapped and sold children, and *you* would kill for him!”

“*No!* I swear to God, I don’t know about it. I really don’t. I told you what my job description entails. That means I practically knew nothing of his business.”

Eddie snorted. “Yeah, you just do his dirty work when he needs you to. How can you know for sure that the people you killed did betray him or not? You don’t care at all, do you? Christ, you’re just as bad as he is, Chee.”

“HEY!” Adrian yelled, positively livid as he marched toward Eddie. Sabina’s friend was even shorter than Eddie was, but at that moment, as he came to his uncle’s defense, the blonde had never seen him more terrifying. Eddie, to his credit, stood his ground against the younger man.

Richie tried to stop his nephew, one hand on Adrian's shoulder as he said, "Adrian, stop it."

But Sabina knew how stubborn her best and oldest friend was. And there was no stopping him when he put his mind on something. Especially if it were for people he cared about.

"Knock it off, Kaspbrak. You have *no idea* what he's gone through all these years. You don't know how *lonely* he was for ten years until I found him five years ago. You don't know the torture he suffered every time he rejected an assignment because you just *don't* say no to Pennywise. There are punishments, and they're horrible. And unlike what you've just accused, Richie *did* care. He always made sure he was doing it for the right reason. But Pennywise..." Adrian let out a cold, mirthless chuckle then. "That bastard's fucking crafty. He knew how to cover the truth well. By the time Richie found out, sometimes it was too late. And he has to live with that knowledge, man. He has to live with the blood of innocents he's killed, because he cares too much about our family and his friends. He traded his soul and his humanity for the safety of his loved ones. So, don't you fucking *dare* say he's as bad as Pennywise, because he's *not*. And if I ever hear you say that again, *old man*, I'm going to stick my foot up your a—"

"That's enough, kid," Richie said warningly. "I appreciate you defending my honour, but I thought we've talked about this."

Adrian looked like he was going to argue, but one look from Richie, he wisely kept his mouth shut. He did let out a loud and dramatic sigh immaturely before he spoke again. "Okay. I get it. We're not telling anyone the truth about you because we want them to keep thinking you're a major assho—"

“Adrian.”

If possible, the younger man's scowl deepened, but this time, he really kept quiet. But that didn't mean he didn't send a nasty glower at Eddie, who looked embarrassed and contrite. He opened and closed at mouth, his eyes never leaving Richie. But it looked like the mercenary was done talking to him, and had turned his attention on the untied shoe-laces of Adrian's shoes. This caused a stifling and awkward silence between all of them, one that Sabina was desperate to break because she could never deal with that kind of situation. Judging from the look on his face, Richie seemed to feel the same way, although he understandably refused to be the one to break the silence. Therefore, when Rebekah spoke, her tone small and careful, Sabina saw how Richie was as relieved as she was.

“Did you ever wonder how convenient it was that he saved you *just* when you planned on leaving the CIA?” Rebekah asked Richie. “I mean, it all happened just a couple months after you told me that you wanted out. Even if he really didn't know who you were, it still was one hell of a coincidence.”

“Oh yeah, I think he's known all along who I really am,” Richie replied. “I mean, he just told me about it today. Said he's always known. And maybe I *did* wonder how convenient it was? But back then, I really was dumb and much too impulsive for my own good. All I could think about was how I'd gotten out from one prison and got into another. And this time, it was at the cost of the lives of my loved ones. I couldn't think of anything else but to make sure I kept him happy while the whole time never really losing my humanity.”

Rebekah hummed as she considered Richie's answer. She opened her mouth to say something, when they heard the sound of people coming. Sabina instantly recognised the two voices as Beverly's and

Kay's. There were two other voices though. One of them was a woman, and the other one was a child. When Beverly and Kay finally came into view with their two guests, Sabina heard Eddie let out a gasp. The woman who came with the two former Angels was holding the hand of a boy who looked to be around ten. The moment she noticed that Eddie was there, she quickly ran toward him. Judging from the way the woman kept on asking about Stanley, it didn't take Sabina long to figure out that she was Mrs Uris, and the little munchkin that was now in Eddie's arms was Uris junior. Eddie was begging the woman, whom he called as Patty, to forgive him for what had happened to Stanley. Tears were falling profusely down the chemist's eyes, and one look at Richie, Sabina could tell that it took all of the mercenary's will-power to *not* give the other man a comforting hug.

"...stop it, Eddie," Patty said sternly through her tears when Eddie kept blaming himself. "What happened today it's not your fault. If anything, according to what I've learned from Miss Marsh and Miss McCall on my way here, it was Stan's fault. But I refuse to blame either of you because really, the blame is on that fucker Pennywise."

"Yes, but still though. *I* was the one who was supposed to die. Not Stan—" Eddie stopped abruptly mid-sentence, his mind seemed to catch on something Patty had said. Looking over his best friend's wife's shoulder, he gasped when his eyes landed on where Beverly was standing.

Beverly, whose whole attention was set on Richie, glaring furiously at him. It looked hilarious because when Adrian noticed what the redheaded former Angel was doing, he immediately stood protectively in front of Richie, as if using his much shorter body to shield his uncle from Beverly's hatred. Richie himself merely rolled his eyes at Beverly, which no doubt angered the redheaded woman even more. Eddie didn't seem to notice it though, as he was still gaping at Beverly. He passed the boy in his arms back into the boy's

mother's arms, and took a step toward where the former Angel was.

"Bev?" Eddie called out. "What are you doing here?"

Finally taking her attention off Richie, Beverly gave Eddie a sheepish smile and waved at him. "Ah, right. Hi, Eddie. I'm here because... because I used to work here?"

Eddie lifted an eye brow as he crossed his arms together. "And where is 'here' exactly? And if you literally give me the address, I'm going to fucking flip."

Sabina thought Beverly wouldn't answer Eddie. But she was wrong when the former Angel shrugged and told him. "Townsend Detective Agency. I used to work here as an Agent. I retired about seven years ago though, not long after I met Ben on what would be my last mission. I was supposed to protect him, but then we also fell in love. The rest is history."

Eddie's voice was barely audible when he spoke next. "Be honest with me, Bev. Did you befriend me because *I* was your mission too?"

The look Beverly's face was so sad, it was obvious what her answer really was. "Eddie, you're my friend. You're my *best* friend. And I want you to listen—"

"TELL ME, BEV!"

Beverly swallowed heavily before she answered him. “You’re not my mission, Eddie. You’re a *favour* I owe to a friend. But I swear, I’ve always loved our friendship—EDDIE!”

Beverly screaming out Eddie’s name was the only warning anyone had when the man suddenly swayed on his feet. Sabina only saw a blur of black going toward Eddie, but she didn’t really realise that it was Richie who had gone to other man’s side. She hadn’t even seen him moved at all. One moment Richie was standing about five feet away from Eddie, then the next thing that happened was the mercenary was already holding a weak and trembling Eddie in his arms. It was all very sweet really. Even after all the horrible things Eddie had yelled at him, it was clear to see that he was still Richie’s top priority. Beside her, Jane and Elena cooed at how romantic it was. Sabina wasn’t as naïve as her two friends—after all, she’d been *married* before. But she did think that Richie and Eddie was so fucking adorable, she felt like she had to kick someone’s ass just to feel badass again. The blonde was just about to say that to her friends, when she caught the look on her mentor’s face. Rebekah was watching Richie following Beverly into one of the many empty bed rooms in the HQ with Eddie in his arms. As per usual, the older blonde looked as poised as always. But Sabina knew better. She could tell that the longer Rebekah looked at Richie’s retreating back, the more her heart broke.

Sabina finally realised what had pushed Rebekah into her drunken fit all those years ago.

She finally realised why the former Angel was so furious when she found out Richie had been alive after all in the past fifteen years.

(“It’s high time you move on from Richie Tozier.”)

(“The greatest person I’d ever had the honour to know.”)

That was the moment Sabina decided, in a fit of immature protectiveness and blind loyalty toward the woman who was more a mother to her than her actual one, that she would hate Richie Tozier until the day she died.

Author's Note:

I'm ofqueensandwitches on tumblr! :D